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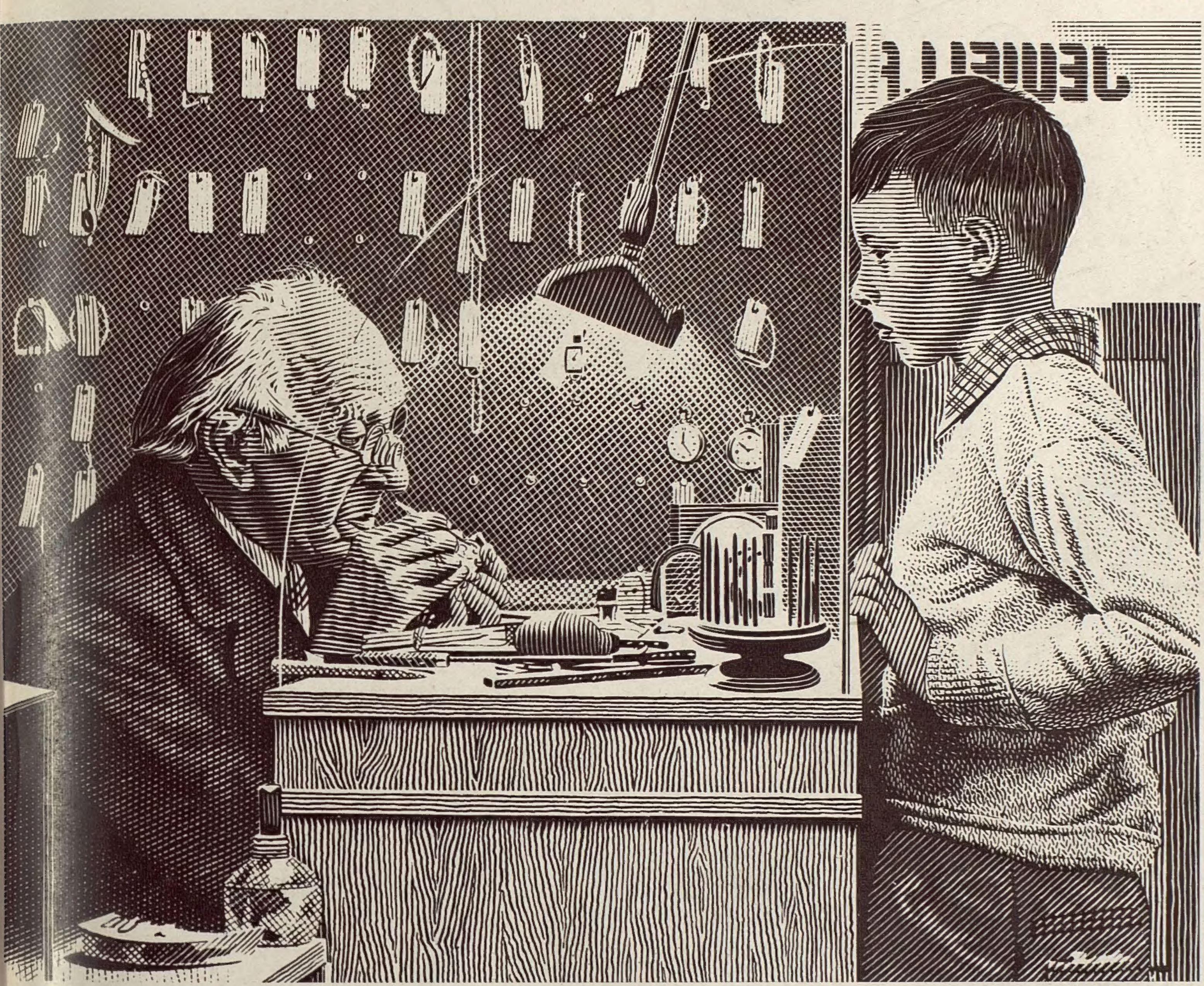

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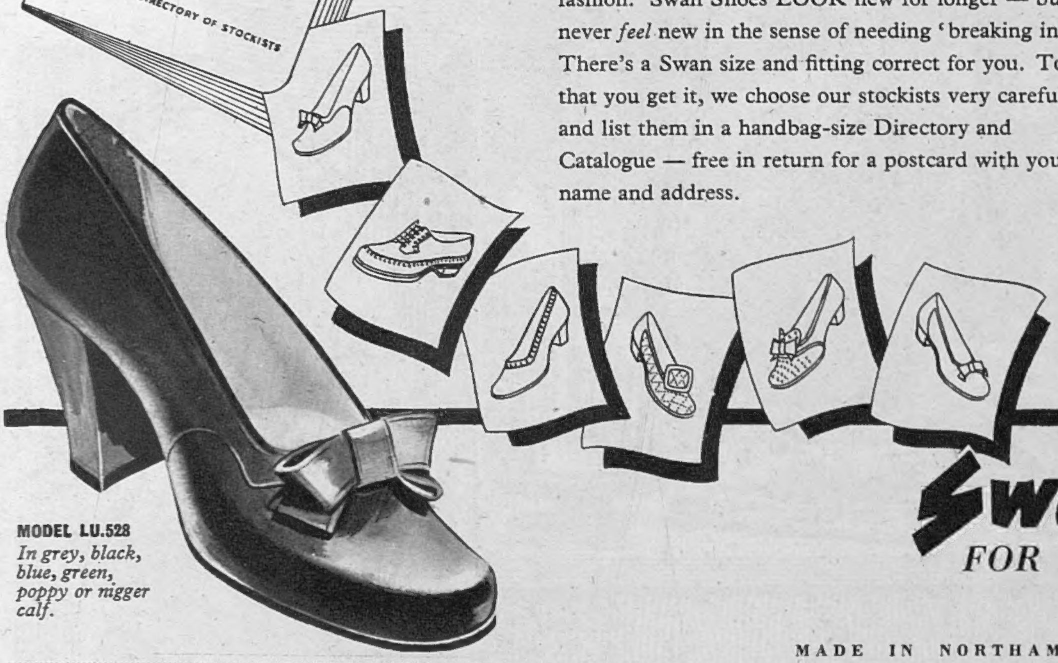

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The Sketch

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 1952

Photographed by Roger Wood.

A MIRROR FOR WITCHES

Ann Heaton as *Doll* and John Hart as *The Stranger* in the Sadler's Wells Company's new ballet, the first performance of which was at Covent Garden on March 4. The choreography is by Andrée Howard; Denis Aplvor composed the music and Norman Adams designed the scenery; all three have contributed excellently to the drama and tension of a most effective ballet. *Doll*, who has a "nice" young man, falls for a demon lover and takes to witchcraft; her spells cause madness and death to others and, eventually, to herself.

SHOW-STOPPING SMASH-HIT DUET: Billie Worth, as Mrs. Sally Adams in *Call Me Madam*, sings "You're Just in Love," with Jeff Warren (right), as Kenneth Gibson. This contrapuntal number held up Anton Walbrook's entrance with six repeats; eventually he joined in with an impromptu dance.

Our Motley Notes

By Toby O'Brien

WHEN I first put on skis, something more than twenty years ago, the season used to last only to the end of February, or the first week in March. Now, however, more and more people have discovered that the snowfalls (and certainly the best sun) only come at a time when the old "winter season" was just ending. Having recently had occasion to get married, we went on a ski-ing honeymoon, just getting in ahead of the £50 limit by twenty-four hours, and going to Switzerland via Paris. Indeed, we found that only by getting married early in the morning, flying to Paris, and there catching the night-train could we get to our destination in twenty-four hours, there now being no boat-train later than one o'clock. (Perhaps British Railways can tell me what has happened to that most convenient four o'clock, or was it 4.30? train from Victoria, which used to run before the war and carried the winter-sports traffic to the Oberland and Engadine.)

Georges Marin, who formerly managed Brown's Hotel in London, and who now runs the Plaza-Athénée, had put a suite at our disposal and, as he wrote beforehand, had "taken the liberty of ordering our dinner." A culinary Harley Street specialist could not have prescribed more admirably for one who had had a bachelor party the previous evening and a reception which started at 11.30 in the morning. It consisted of consommé and a lobster soufflé—which if ever free expenditure on travel returns would in itself be justification for a visit to France—and cheese. Our pleasant little stay in Paris, however, nearly ended in disaster. A combination of new shoes, dutiful armfuls of my wife's belongings, and a curving marble staircase resulted in a magnificent glissade which carried me from the top to the bottom of one flight of stairs, producing more bruises than one normally comes by in a week's ski-ing. Luckily no bones were broken. It would have been hard to return to England in plaster and confess that the injury had been caused by the "treacherous north slopes of the Plaza-Athénée."

FROM Paris we went to Zermatt—I distinctly unwillingly, as I have always been a confirmed Bernese Oberlander. I must confess, however, that this most beautiful of villages, magnificent snowfields, and views which make even the panorama of the Jungfrau, Eiger, Mönch and Wetterhorn seen from Scheidegg or Mürren of small moment, has completely seduced me from my former allegiance. Above all, Zermatt has "atmosphere"—that indefinable *gemütlichkeit* which one used to find at Grindelwald in the old days when "Claire" and "Fifi" presided over that most charming of little pubs, "The Hotel Weisses Kreutz (und Post)"—now in other hands.

In Zermatt, at the Mont Cervin Hotel, we found ourselves under the wing of another O.B.M. (Old Brown's Manager) in Mr. "Bertie" Candrian, the managing director, a redoubtable curler and one of those Swiss (and there are by no means many

of them) who seem to have an instinctive knowledge of and tolerance for the English and their foibles. Zermatt has, of course, as its presiding genius, Captain Bill Bracken, an old friend of many years' standing, who runs his own ski-club and of whom it has been said that he can teach you more ski-ing in three days than you could learn from others in three months.

Another old friend I met there was that fine international skier Captain "Patsy" Richardson (we realised—not altogether to our comfort—that it was twenty-one years since we first met at the Arlberg-Kandahar in Mürren in 1931). "Patsy" runs the Ski Club of Great Britain in Zermatt, and admirably he does it, too. The Ski Club of Great Britain is now a vast organisation and in some places an obtrusive one, especially in those resorts where its authorities seem to believe that its members go to the Alps not to enjoy themselves, but to acquire moral merit by passing its tests. In Zermatt the S.C.G.B. is, as our native bureaucrats should be (but, alas! too infrequently are not), both a servant and civil—always helpful, never dictatorial. God forbid that Zermatt should ever become a second Mürren! Mr. Arnold Lunn, "the father of English ski-ing" (I am not altogether sure that "Arnie," as the years go by, altogether appreciates that title), must sometimes feel a great deal of sympathy for Franckenstein. For it was "Arnie" who, by making Mürren the first centre of downhill racing, also turned it into a cross between a religious cult and a male mountaineering version of the works of Miss Angela Brazil ("Not going in for your second-class test? You unspeakable cad, Fotheringay—'pon my soul, you deserve to be sent to Cov."). And now "Arnie," together with Field Marshal Montgomery, and, in his humble way, your correspondent, bewails the professionalism of ski-racing, the addiction of the average skier to *pistes*, and the loss of the age of innocence in the Alps when we skied in soft snow for pleasure and for joy of the mountains.

INCIDENTALLY, in Zermatt I met an Austrian who was present at the famous encounter between "Arnie" and the Austrian Nazis in St. Anton three days after the Anschluss. The Arlberg-Kandahar, the finest downhill race in the world, was founded jointly by "Arnie" and Hannes Schneider, the major exponent of the Arlberg School, and was held in alternate years at Mürren and St. Anton. It was due to take place in 1938 three days after Hitler marched into Austria. "Arnie" arrived to find no Hannes Schneider. For Hannes, a Monarchist, on hearing that the German troops had crossed the frontier, had proclaimed the Archduke Otto as Emperor, so that for a few hours St. Anton was once more part of the Hapsburg Monarchy. Superior forces arrived, however, and Hannes Schneider was put into jail. "Arnie," therefore, said that the race must, of course, be cancelled as the Arlberg-Kandahar without Hannes Schneider was unthinkable. The Austrian and German Nazis, however, said that, on the contrary, even if the British did not participate, they would go ahead with the "Arlberg-Kandahar." "Splendid," said "Arnie," "and while you are about it, why don't you mount four of your leaders on donkeys, gallop them round a field and call it the English Derby?" It was not called the Arlberg-Kandahar.

"POVERTY," said Dr. Johnson (I cannot for the moment check the quotation), "is the great enemy of human happiness. It makes some virtues impracticable and some impossible." Even with £50 those who wish to spend a fortnight in Switzerland find it a tight squeeze. (On £25 a fortnight is, of course, out of the question, and I predict a major boom for the extraordinarily cheap Spanish resorts now being developed in the Pyrenees and near Madrid.) By tacit consent the British had agreed that there could be no accepting or giving of hospitality, and while there was a certain amount of "moaning at the bar" on the part of the thirsty and less generous individuals, it seemed to work pretty well. It does, of course, penalise the openhanded, but it gives a sovereign "get-out" to nature's fumblers. I remember during the war coming away from a conference with Oliver Bonham-Carter (then Director of the Latin-American Division of the Ministry of Information), Tom Lindsay, and a charming little gentleman of the name of Bock, who from his stature we had christened "Demi-Bock." We decided all to lunch together, miraculously found a taxi and, arriving at our destination, all leapt out, placing our hands in our pockets at the same time. "No," said Oliver, "let Bock pay. He's taken a Treasury course in fumbling." (I hasten to add that, like most of the best "cracks," it constitutes a monstrous libel on Bock, who was, in fact, the soul of generosity.)

I WAS taught history at Stowe by an inspired and inspiring history master (I suppose then only just down from Oxford—though he seemed to us the acme of worldly wisdom and sophistication) by the name of Martin MacLaughlin. He made us learn the elements of European historical geography by buying us Continental Bradshaws. On a Thursday (for example) he would say: "By next Tuesday you will have gone to Vienna. You will work out your time-table and you will produce an account of your route and the strategic, economic and historical importance of the countries and principal places through which you will pass." It was great fun. It taught us a lot of history, a lot of geography. It also gave us the rare accomplishment of being able to read a Continental Bradshaw. As a result I have always been a somewhat independent traveller, preferring to make my own arrangements. Just as, however, it is now no longer possible to attempt to study or fill in an income-tax form without the aid of an accountant, so it is equally impossible to attempt a journey without the assistance of a travel agent. I must record my most pleasurable surprise at the immense efficiency of Messrs. Cook's. Cook's and its subsidiaries (which include most of the major agencies) is, I suppose, a nationalised concern. That is to say, it is owned by British Railways, which in their turn are owned by the State. In spite of this, the efficiency of Cook's is remarkable, and Mr. Stanley Adams, the chairman, is to be congratulated on combining so happily the dignity of a national institution with all the liveliness of private enterprise.

WHILE handing out verbal floral tributes I think I must mention the A.A.'s night breakdown service. Even the best cars produced by the best motor manufacturers occasionally break down, and when they do, tend to choose a late hour and heavy rain in which to do it. Twice in the last few months I have had occasion to make use of the A.A.'s night service. It came to my rescue with almost magical speed, efficiency and courtesy. I imagine that like most members of the A.A., it never occurred to me to study the wide range of free services which the Association provides for its members. It was only by a chance conversation with Cecil Orr, the Assistant Secretary and head of the A.A.'s Public Relations Department (he was once admirably described as "the most popular Public Relations man in the business"), that I knew about the night service. This was my fault for not reading the Association's literature. It is well worth studying. As far as I can see, the A.A. is prepared to do almost anything except tell your fortune, talk to your bank manager about your overdraft, or find you a Nannie in a hurry—though I wouldn't put it past Cecil, in an emergency, to do them all!

We do our best, but . . .

complaints reach us with distressing frequency from readers who have been unable to buy *The Sketch*. There were many such disappointments in the case of our Spring Number, published on March 12.

The fact is that in these days of exorbitantly high production costs it would be economically wasteful—and indeed contrary to the national interests—to print excess copies of a publication of the quality of *The Sketch*. We can print only the number of copies for which sale is guaranteed, and under these circumstances it is impossible for us to help would-be readers unless they place a definite order with their newsagent or station bookstall. Any such orders will ensure that copies are printed to meet them, including special issues such as our Spring Number which may be published from time to time.

For those living outside a newsagent's delivery area the sensible thing to do is to become a subscriber. Under this arrangement *The Sketch* is delivered by post on every publication day throughout the year, including the extra Christmas Number. A year's subscription, including postage, is £3 Inland and Overseas, or £2 19s. to Canada. Subscriptions should be sent direct to the Circulation Manager, *The Sketch*, Ingram House, 195-198, Strand, London, W.C.2.

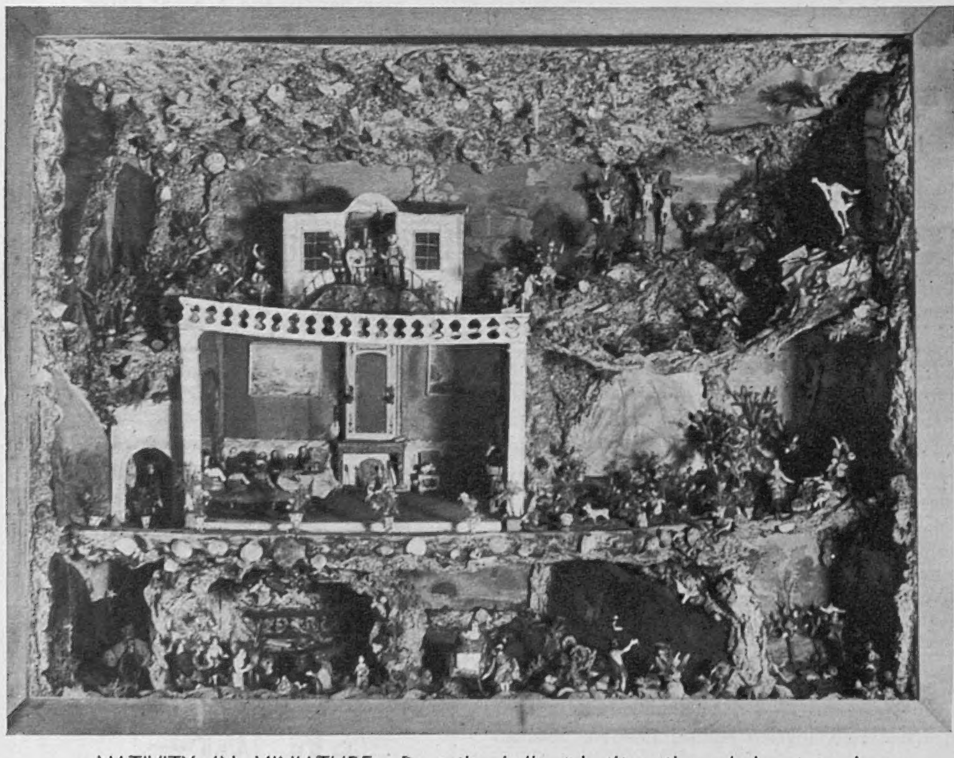
GLASS FIGURES FROM THE PAST. Mrs. King with a case of extremely rare glass. These tiny figures and biblical scenes in grottoes are Verre de Nevers, very little of which exists.

MUSICAL CONJUROR. A Regency clock with a musical box underneath. Wound up, the conjuror whips his cones on and off a succession of changing objects, to a tinkling tune.

At Home to "The Sketch"

MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM KING

A great many people know 15, Thurloe Square, where Mr. and Mrs. William King give wonderful parties, spreading, in the summer, out to the paved garden at the back. The house is full of rare and enchanting things, some of which we show in our photographs. Besides beautiful glass, china, pictures and furniture, there are delightful oddities: antique trick musical boxes, a "water" clock decorated with a lion's head apparently spouting water, which is, in fact, a revolving glass rod like a stick of barley sugar; and a completely Victorian room in which there are lots of Victorian pictures in black frames. Mr. King is on the staff of the British Museum.



NATIVITY IN MINIATURE. Beneath shell stalactites the whole story is told, on three levels, by Nevers figures of people and animals; a particularly pleasing cow stares down at the infant Christ in the stable.

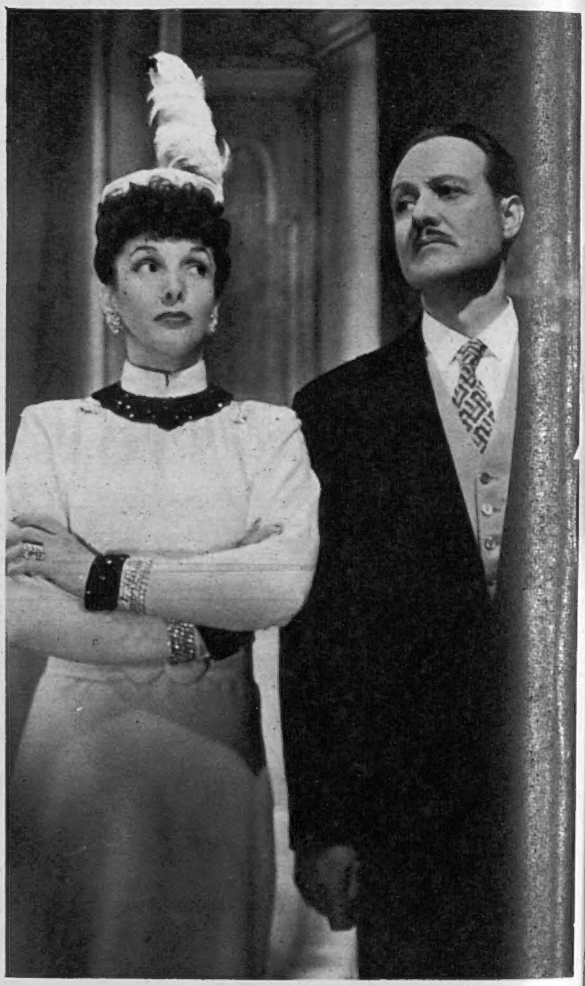
DRINKS BY THE FIRE. The picture over the fireplace is by Luca Giordano, an Italian painter of the seventeenth century.

WITH THEIR HEARTHRUG DOG. The portrait behind, of Mr. King's great-great-grandmother, Mrs. Lloyd, is by Reynolds. A full-length version of it was shown in the recent exhibition of the first hundred years of the Royal Academy.

"CALL ME MADAM"

Mrs. Sally Adams, wealthy Washington hostess, swears her oath of allegiance as U.S. Ambassadress to Lichtenburg. American politics and politicians are pointedly satirised and there is a version of Mr. Dean Acheson in the cast.

(*Below*) Sally Adams has her first encounter with Pemberton Maxwell, Lichtenburg's brusque Chargé d'Affaires. He has annoyed her greatly and she has just this minute fixed him by saying: "Call me Madam."



Lichtenburg used to have an annual fair but hasn't been able to afford it lately. Sally Adams "throws" it for the little old place as lightheartedly as if it were a cocktail party; is seen here with Cosmo (right) and Kenneth.

The fair is on and romance rears its rosy head when Kenneth Gibson meets the Princess of Lichtenburg. During this scene Shani Wallis sings the popular "Ocarina" number with enormous success.

THE applause and encores on the first night of *Call Me Madam*, at the Coliseum on March 15, sent it off with a rattling start in the American musical-comedy stakes. Music and lyrics are by Irving Berlin; it is presented by Jack Hylton, directed by Richard Bird, and has magnificent scenery and costumes by Raoul Pene de Bois. Billie Worth plays Sally Adams, American Ambassadress to the mythical country of Lichtenburg; Anton Walbrook is Cosmo Constantine, a peripatetic politician; Jeff Warren has the part of Kenneth Gibson, Sally's secretary; and Shani Wallis is the Princess of Lichtenburg with whom he falls in love. Politics, politicians, dollars and loans make a thread on which to hang the haywire adventures of the gay Ambassadress who thinks that because Lichtenburg is a Duchy the people must be Dutch. She falls in love with the incorruptible Cosmo, who proves to her that dollars cannot win every trick.

The Washington Square Dance which takes place in Sally Adams's living-room. The set for her Washington home is very grand, with a double staircase backstage and huge windows. All the well-known zing of American youth is put over in this lively scene.

Kenneth and the Princess go on falling in love. His charm as a wooer is made piquant by his make-up as a bespectacled and apparently nondescript person.

Bliss for Sally Adams, back in Washington after the turmoils of Lichtenburg, when her beloved Cosmo Constantine brings her the Order of his country, in which, as the only honest statesman, he holds every Ministerial office in turn.

THE QUESTION, by Walter Stuempfig.—The cinema has made us familiar with typically American boys like these ; Stuempfig's first exhibition here, at the Hanover Gallery, included a great variety of interesting pictures.

AMARYLLIS IN CHAUNTRY COURT, by Stanley Spencer.—This flower's-eye view of a cosy fireside was shown in the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1951 and recently included in a mixed show at Tooth's Gallery.

ALMERIA 1951, by Tristram Hillier.—The sand burns visibly in Mr. Hillier's intensely clear picture, also from Tooth's recent exhibition of important contemporaries which was called "To-day and Yesterday."

NORFOLK LANDSCAPE, by Harry Weinberger.—These boats are seen in an English and very different light from the ones above. From the artist's show of recent paintings which was at the Leger Galleries this month.

CONTEMPORARY and COSMOPOLITAN

There is nearly forty years between the oldest and the youngest of the painters whose work is reproduced on this page. Stanley Spencer is the most senior ; he is a C.B.E. and an R.A., has pictures in famous galleries all over the world, and painted the fascinating murals in All Souls', Burghclere ; his "Resurrection" made even the man in the street agog. . . . Six of Edward Burra's pictures hang in the Tate Gallery ; he is represented in the Museum of Modern Art ; the Contemporary Art Society has bought one from his present violent and brilliant exhibition at the Lefevre, the Felton Bequest another ; he has done memorable décor and clothes for many famous ballets, including *Rio Grande, Don Quixote, Miracle in the Gorbals* and *Don Juan*. . . . The work of Tristram Hillier has also been bought by the Tate Gallery, the Contemporary Art Society and museums of art in America, Canada and Australia. . . . Walter Stuempfig is an American painter whose work has never been shown here before the recent exhibition at the Hanover Gallery ; it is to be seen in the Metropolitan Museum, Museum of Modern Art and Whitney Collection in New York, and in many other public and private collections. . . . Harry Weinberger is the youngest painter represented here ; he came to England as a child refugee from Germany in 1933, and this month at the Leger Galleries had his first one-man show.

THE EXPULSION OF THE MONEY CHANGERS, by Edward Burra.—Gold and eyeballs glitter with evil in this violent and exciting picture from Edward Burra's latest exhibition at the Lefevre Gallery. The paintings, in water-colour on hand-made paper, are very large, the colours intense and gorgeous; the subjects Biblical except for three which present brilliant, fierce and unearthly birds.

Photographed by Karsh.

LADY TWEEDSMUIR

Lady Tweedsmuir, Conservative M.P. for South Aberdeen, is one of the most eloquent women in the House of Commons; she is also an excellent writer of articles for newspapers and periodicals. She has three daughters, two by her first husband, Sir Arthur Lindsay Grant, who was killed in the war; the third is the Hon. Priscilla Susan Buchan. Lord Tweedsmuir's father was John Buchan, the novelist and former Governor-General of Canada; Lady Tweedsmuir is the daughter of Brigadier Alan Fortescue Thomson, D.S.O.

Notes and Pictures from Our Social Diary

MARCH 4.—At Mr. Michael Alexander's flat we drank delicious white Bordeaux wine, much pleasanter than most cocktails, in an attractively-lit room with a steep, pointed ceiling. Mrs. Edmund Howard, a smart Frenchwoman, was there; her husband, who works at the Foreign Office, is one of the brothers of Lord Howard of Penrith; the other married an Italian, Donna Lelia Caetani, daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Sermoneta.

Mrs. Simon Asquith looked in on her way home with her elder son, aged seven; Mrs. Pat Furse, who, as Elizabeth Furse, works in films, told us her husband has bought a huge mound of clay to model her in; lovely Miss Mary Hanbury-Tracy, who was also there, is being modelled by Mr. Leonard Byng; Mr. Robin Feddon, who has written several interesting books about ancient architecture and used to cultivate snails for human consumption, left early. Mr. Alexander was interesting about the social significance of dogs in Italy: there are three grades of licence, coloured, plain and utility as it were. The most expensive are for grand, luxury dogs; then come the plain old household pets; after them, quite cheap, watchdogs.

MARCH 7.—After greatly enjoying *The Deep Blue Sea*, a most absorbing study in convincing unhappiness, we went for a short time to Lady Richardson's farewell party to her son David, who is off to Singapore to sell aeroplanes, brandy and other modern essentials, taking with him a bust of Julius Cæsar and an enormous teapot, to both of which he is devoted.

Among the many people there were Mr. and Mrs. John Hill, who brought their newly-grown-up daughter, Josephine, who has lovely dark red hair; Mr. Felix Hope-Nicholson, who has grown a great big beard; Mrs. Isobel Strachey, the novelist; and Mrs. William King who is At Home to *The Sketch* elsewhere in this issue. In the drawing-room was a large and handsome bed which David Richardson had managed to bring all the way from Arles for £2 10s.; despite frantic protests all round, he got it across Paris on a bus.

MARCH 10.—At Burlington House we could almost see the miraculous mind of Leonardo da Vinci working; many of the drawings are built up sketch by sketch on a single page; others are complete. Most of them come from the Queen's famous collection at Windsor, though a number have been lent by the British Museum and other collections. In the gallery devoted to scientific drawings there are also models of some of his inventions. The Exhibition celebrates the quincentenary of Leonardo, the most outstanding and versatile genius in history.

After looking at these delicate drawings it was difficult to become adjusted to the rather rowdy paintings of Theodore Garman at the Redfern Gallery; a bronze bust by Epstein, Garman's great admirer, seemed the most appealing thing in the room; next, a rather Firbankian interior with a black statue against a "Shocking" pink background.

MARCH 5.—MORE CHIAROSCURO. Augustus John's book about his life is called *Chiaroscuro*; his life goes vigorously on, and here he is after the wedding of his daughter Poppet and Mr. Willem Jilts Pol, who is a Dutch artist.

MARCH 7.—POPULAR AMBASSADOR. M. Massigli, the French Ambassador, gave a reception to guests from Morocco at his house in Kensington Palace Gardens. *L. to r.*, Mr. H. M. Teshamini, Si Ahmed Nejjar, Si Abdel Kebir Lel Kettani and Mr. Addeslah Hajji.

MARCH 8.—OUT DANCING. Field Marshal Lord Alexander went with a party to the Café de Paris which is a pleasure resort of very long standing; here he is dancing with Mrs. John Bingham, authoress and playwright.

MARCH 10.—SMILES AND SOLEMNITY. Mr. and Mrs. Clement Attlee's youngest daughter, Alison, married Mr. Richard Davis at the lovely old church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Great Missenden; the solemn bridesmaid is Ann Shipton.

Notes and Pictures from Our Social Diary

MARCH 12.—CHALLENGE CUP DAY. On the *left* Lady Digby presents the Macdonald-Buchanan Champion Challenge Trophy to Mr. L. G. Scott, whose *Summer Knight* won it at the Spring Stallion Show. *Right:* Lady Downe of Wykeham Abbey presenting Mr. G. F. Fawcett with the challenge cup won by his horse *Trusty* in the Derwent Hunt point-to-point.

MARCH 13.—LISTENING TO CABARET. Simpsons Services Club gave a party for St. Dunstan's at which there was a cabaret admirably chosen to appeal aurally. *L. to r.*, front row, Major Huskisson, Sir Neville and Lady Pearson, Sir Ian and Lady Fraser.

MARCH 11.—At Covent Garden we saw a young dancer, April Olrich, in her first big rôle: Doll, in the new ballet, *A Mirror for Witches*. She is small and attractive and danced well; although she is perhaps a little young to convey the dramatic intensity required for the part, her youth and petiteness in some ways added to the mounting horror of this exciting ballet—she looked a waif turned witch and there was pathos in her evil, of which she seemed much more the victim than the conscious perpetrator. Leslie Edwards, as Bilby, was excellent; so was Julia Farron as his wife. The demure little twins, who run mad and die as a result of Doll's spells, were beautifully done by the Misses Margaret Dale and Joan Benesh.

We met Miss Andrée Howard, choreographer of the ballet, and Mr. Denis Aplvor, the composer; they told us how they worked it out together in close collaboration which included many frenzied telephone calls.

MARCH 12.—Oxford University Centaurs beat the R.A.F. Technical College, Henlow, by 7 goals to nil in the final for the Argonaut Association Football Trophy, presented by *The Tatler* for amateur sides who would not normally consider entering competitive football because of team uncertainty. Lord Wigram, who came with Lady Wigram, presented the trophy and team awards after the match. Players and spectators all enjoyed themselves, and there will soon be a committee meeting to discuss enlarging the competition.

MARCH 13.—At 20, Upper Brook Street, there was a cocktail party private view of paintings by Princess Helen Yourievitch. She has just spent two months in Nassau, where most of the pictures were painted. Among the large crowd at the party were the French Ambassador, M. Massigli, Mr. and Mrs. Sacheverell Sitwell, Lady Bridget Parsons, Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Sykes, Mr. John Sutro, film maker; Mr. Roy Harrod, the economist, and his wife; Lady Jean Campbell, the Duke of Argyll's daughter and Lord Beaverbrook's granddaughter; Mr. Hamish St. Clair Erskine, Lady Allenby and plenty more. Princess Helen has done many interesting things, including making pictures of Hittite objects from remains found on an archæological "dig." Her sister, Nika, is married to Mr. Edward Hulton; they are the daughters of Prince Serge Yourievitch, a White Russian sculptor.

MARCH 14.—"Flowerwards the Women" was the burden of speeches at a meeting in connection with the 1952 Flower Academy, which is planned for July 16 and 17 at the New Horticultural Hall. This is to be an exhibition; quite distinct from

MARCH 13.—MORE OF THE ST. DUNSTAN'S PARTY. On the *left*, Mr. Colin Fraser and Mr. Dennis Bingham sit together, Mrs. Fraser and Miss Dean on the left and right. In the laughing group (*right*) are l. to r., Mr. Jack Pryor, Miss Ouseley, Sir Neville Pearson and Dr. S. Leonard Simpson, who received the guests.

a show, which is competitive; the idea is to display flower arrangements as if they were pictures, hence the name "Flower Academy." Flower societies from London, Dorset, Colchester and London will exhibit, and it is hoped that Lord Aberconway, President of the Royal Horticultural Society, will open the Academy.

The Simpsons Services Club party at which our photographs (*on opposite page*) were taken was in the evening; it began with cocktails, went on to dancing, supper and cabaret, giving pleasure to a large number of blind people. Other guests, apart from those in the photographs, included Air Vice-Marshal and Mrs. R. S. Aitken, Captain and Mrs. Broadley, Mr. L. Fawcett, Miss Hilda Ibbetson, Miss Kenchington, Matron Ramshaw and Miss Ivy Coultate.

MARCH 15.—Racing, weather and going were all good when the Taunton Vale Foxhounds had their point-to-point at Jordans, near Ilminster, where it has been held for as long as anyone can remember. Sybil, Lady Portman, is joint-Master with Lieut.-Colonel Phillips, who was also a steward. Another steward, Major Kenneth Wallis, is secretary of the South and West Wilts Hunt and a well-known judge at horse shows. Mr. J. F. Cann, from the East Devon, won the Open race with his *Small Hotel* in an exciting finish. The Ladies' race, won by Mrs. Woodhouse on *Surfeit* (Blackmore Vale) was disappointingly small; only four runners, though a number of horses had been entered. This was because the Wilton Hunt had chosen the same day for their point-to-point and had an Open Ladies' race, a most unusual event which attracted owners from all over the country; forty-three horses were entered and it had to be split into two parts. Division I was won by Mr. Crawshaw-Bailey's *Royal Prince*, ridden by Miss G. Walker; and Division 2 by *Coral Boy*, ridden by Miss Buller-Popham, whose mother was, at one time, Master of the Mendip Foxhounds.

Well-known local figures at Jordans included Mrs. Robert Vernon, Sir Alfred and Lady Slade and Major Bonzo Parks; Lady Portman presented the cups to winning owners after the last race. She wore a cosy-looking lambs'-fleece coat.

MARCH 18.—In London for a moment was Mr. Graham Greene, who has been, and *is*, darting about the world at a feverish pace. Just back from Indo-China, he was flying to Paris for dinner; back here to-morrow and almost immediately off to Capri for two days. Writing absorbingly gloomy novels certainly pays!

In the evening we had drinks with Major and Mrs. Ian Farquhar at their delicious tiny flat in Three Kings Yard, a very old, cobbled bit of London near Claridge's. They are now planning to leave the flat and move to somewhere larger. Lady Bridget Clark, Lord and Lady Minto's elder daughter, was there, looking very pretty despite a heavy afternoon at the Zoo with her three-year-old son; Lady Middleton's daughter, Mrs. Gwynnie Brodrick, just back from Paris, where the prices of clothes at the spring shows had alarmed her: £600 for a dress lightheartedly paid by the bankrupt French; dashing Mr. David Metcalfe and Mr. Lionel Berry. Presently the lights fused, but luckily there were candles. By their light, the French pug and the four Fisher love-birds—very tiny characters with parrot faces—looked exotic. We left, by torchlight, to the thud of arriving electricity experts; Major Farquhar, who had found nothing wrong in the fuse-box, was gloomy about their chances.

MARCH 13.—PAINTER PRINCESS. Princess Helen Yourievitch with M. Massigli, the French Ambassador, at the cocktail party private view of her pictures at 20, Upper Brook Street.

MARCH 14.—ORCHIDS FOR THE BRIDE. Lord Killearn's daughter, Miss Mary Lampson, after her marriage to Colonel Alexander Monro at Chelsea Registry Office.

MARCH 17.—ST. PATRICK'S DAY. Lieut.-Colonel Ivo Reid, Irish Guards, is Commandant of the Guards Depot, Caterham, where his wife presented him with a sprig of shamrock.

MARCH 18.—WEDDING RECEPTION. After the marriage of Dr. James Banks, the famous plastic surgeon, and Miss Teresa Beardmore, there was a reception at the Belfry Club. *Left: l. to r.*, Mr. P. Clarkson, Lady Margaret Stewart and Dr. Banks. *Right: l. to r.*, H.E. Abdul Melik Khedheri, Irakian Minister in London, Dr. Banks, Miss Billie Worth, and the bride.

Notes and Pictures from Our Social Diary

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. Lord Methuen, *left*, and Mr. Hugo Pitman, part of whose collection appears in the next photograph, were among the seventeen collectors who loaned pictures for the exhibition; *right*, Mrs. Pitman.

SUNSET IN WALES BEHIND THEM. Mrs. Madge Garland and Sir Leigh Ashton, who are to be married on April 8, talking to Sir Philip Hendy.

MARCH 19.—THE CONTEMPORARY ART SOCIETY'S PARTY.

BETWEEN TWO CHAIRMEN. *Left*, Lord Jowitt, chairman of the Tate Gallery; *right*, Sir Edward Marsh, chairman of the Contemporary Art Society; Mr. Hugo Drury between them.

MARCH 19.—The Contemporary Art Society had an evening party at the Tate Gallery as a start to their exhibition, *Seventeen Collectors*, which shows pictures from the private collections of members of the Executive Committee. There were also three paintings, a Sickert, a Matthew Smith and an Alfred Sisley, loaned by Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, who is the Patron. The collections are made as separate from each other as space allows; also on show were the lovely pictures presented by the C.A.S. to the Tate.

Journalists and photographers were fighting for celebrities like seagulls for crusts: Lord Jowitt, the clever and distinguished Labour peer who was Lord Chancellor and also, as he said, "happens to be Chairman of the Tate," was one who kindly made himself available; many of the other collectors, committee members and painters there also appear in our photographs. A candle-lit buffet was presided over by famous large bronzes of the Tate's permanent collection and art was toasted fervently in red and white wine.

The C.A.S. was founded in 1910 to acquire the work of living artists, and has presented 250 pictures to eighty galleries in the last four years.

MARCH 20.—More dates for private and charity dances have been fixed; a few for the near future, but many more after the end of Court mourning. The Horse and Hound annual ball at Grosvenor House is due on March 28; the Rugger Ball is at the same place on the following night; on April 18, Mrs. John Cameron is giving a dance for the Misses Jennifer and Rosemary Cameron at Cowesby Hall, in Yorkshire; the Red Hat Ball in aid of the Christ Church United Clubs is to be at the Dorchester on April 30; on June 2 Mrs. Stockdale is giving a dance for Miss Rosemary Stockdale in Northamptonshire; the 1st and 3rd Trinity Boat Club's May Ball is to be at Cambridge on June 9; Mrs. Ronald Senior is giving a dance for Miss Susan Senior on June 11; on June 24 Lady Mary Campbell gives a dance for Miss S. Dunn; the Rhodesian Ball at Londonderry House has been postponed for the second time and is now due on June 25; on June 26 Mrs. Oswald Lewis is giving a dance for Miss Diana Lewis; Mrs. George Spencer has announced that hers for Miss Catherine Spencer will be on June 28; on June 30 there is to be a charity dinner-dance at Ciro's; Mrs. Thomas Lilley and Mrs. Lees are giving a dance for Miss Patricia Cottenham and Miss Clarissa Chaplin on July 1; the following night Mrs. Robert O'Brien and Mrs. Reynolds are entertaining for their daughters; the Lord's Taverners' Ball is to be on July 7; on July 8 Sir Andrew and Lady Clark give a dance for Miss Jennifer Clark; there are Royal Garden Parties on July 10 and 17.

DINNER IN THE WHISTLER ROOM. *Clockwise*, Mr. John Fremantle, Miss Diana Anderson, Miss G. Ryrie, Mr. A. Wedderburn, Lady Anderson, Mrs. Oscar Ashcroft, Mr. J. Partridge and Mrs. A. Wedderburn.

YOUNG DESIGNER. Mr. Norman Adams, who designed the scenery for *A Mirror for Witches*, is second from left, his wife beside him; on his other side Mr. Manchester, a painter, and Mrs. Heygate, a writer.

The Mayor of Mentone, M. Pierre Parrenthou-Dormoy, performed the ceremony at the Town Hall ; interested local residents looked on.

Here Lady Savernake is signing the register after the marriage ceremony, which apparently didn't include a wedding ring. She is a granddaughter of Sir Ernest Wills.

Lord and Lady Savernake toasting each other in the Riviera sunshine after their marriage ; she has exchanged her coat for a bouquet.

CEREMONY AT MENTONE

Wearing a cosy mink coat, Miss Edwina Wills, daughter of Lieut.-Colonel Edward de Winton Wills and heiress to much tobacco money, married Lord Savernake, the Earl of Cardigan's heir, at Mentone Town Hall on March 17. She is nineteen and her father was at first reluctant to let her marry so young, but finally consented ; Lord Savernake is twenty-five. They had a two-day honeymoon and flew back to England last Wednesday, March 19.

The bride photographed at the Villa L'Oiseau Bleu, the Mentone house of her uncle, Major George Wills. Her mother, who was Miss Sylvia Ogden before her marriage, died in 1946.

OUR BOOKSHELF

THE TROUBLE AT NUMBER SEVEN. By Gerald Bullett. (*Michael Joseph ; 12s. 6d.*)
MY NAME IS MICHAEL SIBLEY. By John Bingham. (*Gollancz ; 9s. 6d.*)
THE GOURMET'S WEEK-END BOOK. By André Simon. (*Seeley Service ; 12s. 6d.*)
MERRY GENTLEMEN. By Rowland Watson. (*Werner Laurie ; 30s.*)

by RUPERT CROFT-COOKE

"THE TROUBLE AT NUMBER SEVEN" is the first novel which Mr. Gerald Bullett has given us for some years. It is very much the work of a practised writer ; it has insight and suspense, and they are beautifully balanced so that one is never impeded by those clever bits of "characterisation," those too-conscious pieces of "psychology" which crop up suddenly and jaggedly in many modern novels, nor are the events of the story too hurriedly related. It might be taken, in fact, for a model of what a novel of this kind should be.

It is set in a London suburb of half-a-century ago, an area of great respectability. Most of the events are seen through the eyes of a young boy, and in Charlie Pilcrow Mr. Bullett achieves that rare thing in fiction, a credible and likeable child, neither priggish nor visionary. Charlie's mother dies and his father, a gentle, rather silly man who keeps a chemist's shop, marries again—the sister of the minister at the Ebenezer Tabernacle which the Pilcrows attend. She turns into, perhaps had always secretly been, a malicious mad creature, and she is murdered by morphine poisoning. Charlie's father is accused and tried. The Court scenes are extremely well done and the suspense is so artfully maintained that it takes a strong-minded reader not to cheat himself of it by looking ahead to see what the jury's findings may be. As a period piece, as a portrait of a boy, as a picture of a middle-class family in the 'nineties, and as a warm-hearted human story this is an excellent book.

"MY NAME IS MICHAEL SIBLEY," by John Bingham, though vastly different in mood and outlook, has a similar theme, but it is told in the first person by the man accused of murder. The compass is narrower, the terror and intensity far greater. A man called John Prosset is murdered and almost immediately the police start to question Michael Sibley about his death. Sibley is innocent of the murder, but he and his fiancée, Kate Marsden, have certain things which they wish to conceal, and some of Sibley's replies are equivocal. The Detective-Inspector and Sergeant, who are polite and restrained at first, grow more and more insistent as the story goes on. They are cleverly drawn as human beings whose personal characteristics are subordinated to the necessities and practices of their calling. One feels as their questions continue and every small inconsistency in Sibley's replies is noted and his most natural errors gleefully picked on, that this is exactly how reasonably intelligent C.I.D. men would proceed, and how an innocent suspect would behave. Indeed, a part of the awesome attraction of this book will come, I think, from every reader's feeling that he might be in Sibley's place, that circumstances could malignantly combine to make him the unhappy, wriggling, trapped creature that Sibley becomes. Perhaps Mr. Bingham has piled on the coincidence with too lavish a hand, perhaps some of the evidence which accumulates against Sibley seems thin and contrived, but the fact remains that he is innocent and that to the police he appears at last so certainly guilty that he is charged with the murder. This is a clever and readable novel, guaranteed to make the hardiest flesh creep, not by night-fears and goblins, but by the sinister results of misunderstanding and suspicion.

IT is good to find that the latest addition to the week-end book series is *The Gourmet's Week-End Book*, and that it has been written by Mr. André Simon. I dislike the use of the word "feast" for a book, since it confuses two excellent things, two separate pleasures, but at least one may say that this is an appetiser, and a very potent one. It is, in fact, a miscellany of essays, menus, recipes, recollections of good meals, stories, practical hints, warnings, and what-have-you, all concerning food and drink. Mr. Simon is wise and entertaining on tips, toasts, the French menus for which he gives a short glossary, old cookery books from Guillaume Tirel's *Viandier*, the first French cookery book, vintages, tobacco as the friend or foe of wine, the origin of liqueurs, caviare, herrings, and many other subjects. He has a chapter on Cognac brandy but nowhere mentions Armagnac. He tells the life-story of Escoffier, whom he considers the greatest chef since Carême. Best of all, perhaps, he pays tribute to that charming and remarkable man Ernest Oldmeadow, who wrote a number of good satires, edited a weekly review and, under the name of Francis Downham, was a successful wine-merchant. In short, Mr. Simon's book is a delight and, like the good meals it recalls, its items are carefully chosen, sufficiently varied, exquisitely tempting.

FROM this it is pleasant to go on to Mr. Rowland Watson's *Merry Gentlemen*, described aptly enough as "a curious, diverting and instructive miscellany of the Bacchanalian arts and sports, with notes, quotes and comments." This is a lordly quarto, with a coloured frontispiece and a good many illustrations chiefly from old prints. It is a Bacchanalian Scrapbook, an anthology of prose and verse celebrating good liquor, mostly from eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century sources with a few more modern. It is wholly English and quotes Swift: "There is no nation yet known in either hemisphere where the people of all conditions are more in want of some cordial to keep up their spirits than in this of ours." These limitations do not accord well with a topic of such wide appeal, and though the extracts quoted are in themselves entertaining enough the whole effect is inclined to be monotonous, a record of the boasts and achievements by pot-valiant men in wigs. There are six-bottle clubs, toping and tipplers, small beer and burnt brandy, flagons and home-made wine, drunken schoolmasters, ale-houses, quarts of porter, and so on, all very hearty and rumbustious, but lacking somewhat in taste. The whole collection covers some unusual ground, though, and to those whose stomachs are strong enough, will no doubt give pleasure.

Lord and Lady Iveagh : an illustration from *The Elveden Enterprise*, by George Martelli (Faber ; 21s.). This book, which describes a venture little short of an agricultural epic, is concerned with an experiment which began in 1927, when Lord Iveagh inherited an estate regarded as agriculturally hopeless. Since that time the estate—a large tract of desperately poor land in one of the driest parts of England, which for years had been thought fit only for pheasants, rabbits, and forestry—has been converted into productive farmland, yielding enough food for several thousands of people.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

LOVELY PEGGY.
By Janet Camden Lucey. (*Hurst and Blackett ; 18s.*)

A partial but spirited biography of Peg Woffington. There is no attempt to conceal her faults, but she appears as a magnificent wanton with "abounding intelligence and scalding wit."

WILKIE COLLINS.
By Robert Ashley. (*Arthur Barker ; 7s. 6d.*)

A short view, biographical and critical, by an American who appears to have wisely chosen Wilkie Collins as a subject for research but fails to communicate any very clear picture.

WAIT NOW.
By Rachel Knappett. (*Michael Joseph ; 12s. 6d.*)

A chatty, amiable book about Ireland. Miss Knappett assures the reader that she landed there "lonesome, forlorn, with very little money, knowing not a soul in the length and breadth of the country." She describes the pleasant experiences that fell to her.

THE OLD PLACE.
By C. C. Vyvyan. (*Museum Press ; 15s.*)

An embarrassingly sentimental account of a house and garden occupied during the war, to its owner's indignation, by "minions of martial law or members of the British Army." "The only thing I did not show them was the rose-window glade ; what would be the use of speaking to these men about the death of celandine and primroses ?"

MIRACLE AT CARVILLE.
By Betty Martin. (*Lehmann ; 12s. 6d.*)

A simple, very moving and very heartening account of a girl's life in America after contracting leprosy.

THE HAPPY VALLEY
By Jules Roy. (*Gollancz ; 12s. 6d.*)

A novel about a Frenchman in the R.A.F. by a Frenchman who was in the R.A.F. It is a mistake, I think, to give the outward semblance of fiction to a book which never loses its air of the documentary.

THE RECORDS AND COLLECTIONS OF THE COLLEGE OF ARMS.
By Anthony Richard Wagner. (*Burke's Peerage ; 6s.*)

The book sets out what can and cannot be found in the records of the College of Arms, to which no other guide in printed form exists.

In three separate volumes at 7s. 6d. each Dent has published *England, Scotland* and *London for Everyman*, by H. A. Piehler ; useful and wieldy guide-books, each with a good map section and suggestions for walks and expeditions.

The box-office on whose takings so much depends. But all is well ; by the time the season opens £30,000 has been taken, representing 86,000 seats sold—and this despite deliberate limitation.

Behind the Scenes at the Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

GETTING SHAKESPEARE READY FOR A SEASON

The rather austere appearance of the Memorial Theatre tends to belie the all-year-round activity which goes on within its domain, for perhaps we naturally accept the Shakespeare Season for the actual eight months of its run and forget the other four. In point of fact, initial preparations for the 1953 season are already under way, and director Anthony Quayle is making tentative bookings in respect of leading players. With the company assembled on paper, final decisions are made as to which plays will be presented and with the leading parts established, the immediate job is to audition and choose the smaller-part actors who must be capable of playing satisfactorily several different parts through the season.

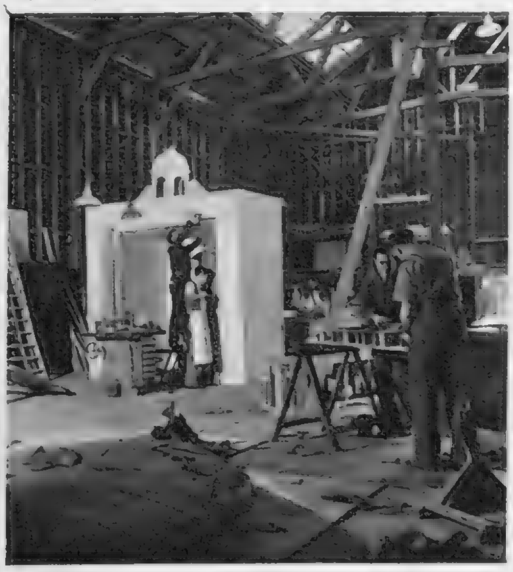
Then follows the period of designs and sketches for costumes, properties and scenery, and when these have been approved, the various craftsmen you will be meeting in these photographs buy all the necessary materials and get to work. The company assembles in January, rehearsals commence and all the work goes forward, hand-in-hand, ready at last for one special day in the calendar—the Stratford Opening Night.

The first two plays of the season, *Coriolanus* and *The Tempest*, will be reviewed by Mr. J. C. Trewin in our next issue.

By "THE SKETCH" special photographer, Harold White, F.I.B.P., F.R.P.S.

Director Anthony Quayle with his first lieutenant, the General Manager and Licensee of the Theatre, George Hume. They are frequently reduced to discussing business over luncheon.

The production wardrobe under the direction of Cyril Kegan Smith. All the costumes are made here, season by season, and when he can't buy the actual material he wants, he even indulges in dyeing and painting on his own account.



Over in Old Town, but only a stone's-throw from the Theatre, Fred Jenkins (second from right) runs the Scenic Workshop. His ingenuity seems to know no bounds and the only limiting factor is the availability of material.

When the construction carpenters have made the sets and structures for backcloths, scenic artist Reg. Sayle starts to work. He reckons to paint a 60′ x 30′ cloth in three days—and likes to spend a leisurely busman's holiday, painting landscapes.

[*Continued overleaf.*

Behind the Scenes at the Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon (contd.)

The Old Theatre was burned down in 1926 and what was left of it has been turned into a rehearsal room adjoining the new theatre. Here nymphs of *The Tempest* rehearse their dance under Pauline Grant, watched by players from *Coriolanus.*

A lighting conference. Julia Wootten (right) expounds her ideas to Glen Byam Shaw, Anthony Quayle and Patrick Donnell. As in all other stages, the model, built to a scale of half-inch to the foot, is the foundation-stone of the production.

When the sets and properties are completed and delivered to the Theatre, they come under the care of Eddie Golding (second from right), whose job it is to keep them in good order and have them in the right place at the right time.

At the lighting control panel, Peter Paget Smith, chief electrician, has duplicate panels so that he works from No. 1 whilst No. 2 is prepared for the next sequence. He has microphone connections with stage and prompt corner.

In the prompt corner Jack Thomson, assistant stage manager, gives the necessary cues for the lighting as well as actually prompting the players. He has a microphone connection with the sound-proofed lighting control room.

A scene in the foyer on the opening night of the current season, March 13. The Stratford Memorial Theatre, unlike most others, has a spacious tiled-floored foyer and a delightful fountain and pond at the foot of the stairs leading to the restaurant.

Minor players share dressing-rooms. Seated: Alexander Davion, First Officer in *Coriolanus* and cast next for Ferdinand in *The Tempest.* Behind: David Dodimead, Volce Senator in *Coriolanus* and Sebastian in *The Tempest.*

Above: Almost an anachronism, for here, in the Green Room, we found a Roman Senator buying a cup of coffee and several Roman citizens playing cards. It is unusual for a modern theatre to have a green room.

Right: The culmination of months of preparation. The curtain call at the end of the opening night of the season.

Below: Mary Ellis, with her dresser Marie, prepares for her part as Volumnia in *Coriolanus*. On the river side of the Theatre the stars' dressing-rooms are noticeable in that they are the only rooms to have balconies.

TALKING OF TELEVISION

By Cyril Butcher

WE had looked forward to the inauguration of the latest television transmitter at Kirk o' Shotts as an event of a certain importance. This new link in the chain, situated midway between Glasgow and Edinburgh, not only draws something like 3,000,000 new customers into the net, but provides a unifying influence between England and Scotland which it is difficult to over-rate.

These are restless days. Scottish nationalism is in the ascendant and ostensibly trivial matters like the Coronation Stone controversy are apt to be inflated to serious proportions. The charge is constantly levelled that Westminster does not give a hoot about Scotland and that as long as she contributes to the prosperity of England, what goes on north of the Border may as well go hang.

Whatever the justice of this accusation, the B.B.C. apparently did not see fit to do anything to disprove it. The Scots might, with reason, have expected that the beginning of their television service would have called forth an extra special effort for the occasion, such as was made for the openings of Holme Moss and Sutton Coldfield.

But what in point of fact happened? The Scots were treated to a glum, dull, embarrassed and embarrassing opening ceremony from the Edinburgh studio, which was just about as unpromising a half-hour's television as we can remember. Lord Tedder, one of the B.B.C. governors, and Mr. James Stuart, Secretary of State for Scotland, were plainly ill-at-ease as they spoke, and by the time it came to the solemn moment of the Prayer of Dedication by the Very Rev. Charles L. Warr, Dean of the Thistle and Chapel Royal, it was too late to save the occasion. The exhibition of Scottish country dancing which wound up the ceremony may have been enjoyable to the expert audience in the studio, but from the television point of view it was handled with the same lack of imagination that characterised the golden opportunity which had been lost.

And what great glamorous treat followed? What super-effort provided the highlight of the evening? *Kaleidoscope!* and a Kaleidoscope with an arch, coy, Scottish flavour. In fact, a rash of Caledonianism appeared to break out in most of the programmes for the next few days. It was almost as if someone had realised too late that they'd made a mess of things and were trying to make amends. But it simply wasn't good enough.

And while in the nationalistic mood, we must register an indignant protest at the Irish programme *Cead Mile Failthe*, which was inflicted upon viewers from Liverpool on St. Patrick's Night. The "cabaret" aroused no marked enthusiasm from the merrymakers in St. George's Hall, and left us stunned with its dreariness. If ever our heart was moved to pity it was for the Liverpool Irish Pipe Band, who were just left stranded at the end of their counter-marching on the ballroom floor. Never has there been such a cue for a "quick fade," but no, the picture remained doggedly, while the dance band struck up, people started singing (out of time and tune), others swayed from side to side, still others began to dance, and the whole thing degenerated into a shambles.

However, there were one or two brighter spots in this unfortunate week-end. The first instalment of *The Broken Horseshoe*, a new serial in six parts, was most promising. It certainly marks a brilliant double début in television for Francis Durbridge, the author, and Martyn C. Webster, the producer. John Robinson, as a hospital surgeon, and John Byron as a C.I.D. man, seem to have some trouble on their hands with at least one murder, and there is a mysterious young woman around (Barbara Lott) who looks like complicating things no end. We can't wait to see what happens next, and that's the proof of the serial pudding.

Then there was a gay little comedy by George Moresby White and Rex Rienits, *No Smoking*, which we prophesied would be fun. It was. Dealing with the not unlikely results of the invention of a real cure for smoking, this could have been a memorable comedy had it been pruned and taken at a rollicking rather than ambling pace, and the settings been more uniformly convincing. We cannot believe that the Cabinet Room at No. 10, Downing Street is only a rough 6 ft. square, and that the Ministers have to sit in shoulder-crushing contiguity. But fun it was, and the cast, led by Jane Barrett, Alan Webb and Robert Beatty, gave delightful, if leisurely performances.

Being engaged on a similar task at the moment, we can appreciate the sense of responsibility Michael Pertwee must have felt when he decided to make a play from some unfinished notes for a short story by that ace of writers, Somerset Maugham. The result, *Rainy Day*, while lacking some of the Maugham bite, remained sufficiently within his idiom to be well satisfying. As is usual with Mr. Maugham, the story is simple, but devastatingly understandable. Two friends—planters in the Far East—share a house. George, who never has been known to receive a letter from home, buys an unopened one from Nigel out of his impressive mail, and refuses to divulge the contents. Suspicion is generated and leads to tragedy. Simple but spell-binding, for which credit must go not only to the author, but to producer Eric Fawcett and Edward Evans and George Cole as the two friends.

Earlier in the period we had seen some undiluted Maugham in the shape of his comedy *Home and Beauty*. This revolves round the very efficient solution by what the author describes as "a dear little thing" to the problem facing her when she finds that she is married to two men at the same time. It provides opportunities for three brilliant comedy performances and these were well taken by Barbara Murray, Barry K. Barnes and Geoffrey Sumner. Larger than thumbnail was a delicious sketch of a thoroughly reprehensible solicitor by Frank Birch, and we congratulate Desmond Davis, the producer, on his lightness of touch.

One day, no doubt, Christian Simpson will find an artistically satisfying realisation to what still remains improbable: the visual interpretation, on television, of classical music. If he does not, it will not be through any lack of trying, but his latest effort, *Symphonic Patterns*, cannot claim to be the answer. The effort was considerable; the music was played by no less than the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, under the baton of John Hollingsworth, and dancing to it were a talented group, with choreography by Lisa Brionda. In spite of a certain brusqueness on Mr. Hollingsworth's part, the music was a treat, and the dancing charming. But the two did not merge. We feel that Mr. Simpson's approach is still too definite and dictatorial. He should bear in mind that the vision conjured up by music is dreamlike and highly particular to the individual. We invite him to try again, but in a vastly more abstract manner.

WATCHING BRIEF

Highlights of the Next Fortnight

NOT being much of a football fan, our own personal fresh-air Outside Broadcasts season begins with the Boat Race each year. This always makes exciting television, though it is too much to hope that Saturday's race will provide as much drama as last year's. Once again the event will be shown from start to finish, and with two water-borne cameras there should be an interesting variety of shots. Richard Dimbleby, Michael Henderson, T. B. Langton and Richard Burnell will keep us landlubbers in intimate touch with the progress of the race.

Even the very title, *Mourning Becomes Electra*, has an air of significance and a warning that the play is in the Grand Manner. This is indeed the case, and Eugene O'Neill has surely earned his place among the classic authors by this work alone. It is a nineteenth-century, New England version of the Greek legend of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Orestes and Electra. Produced in two parts by Royston Morley, on March 30 and April 3, viewers will see Marjorie Mars, Andrew Osborn and Catherine Lacy in the chief parts.

It may be that the Drama Department is running short of plays. At any rate, *To Live in Peace*, which was seen last autumn, and proved a great success, is to be done again on April 1, with Fred O'Donovan producing. This gentle little comedy was written by Giovacchino Forzano and adapted by Victor Rietti, who also plays the leading part. Others will be in the hands of Robert Rietti, Grace Arnold and Petra Davies. The B.B.C. repeat their advice that this play has nothing to do with the film *Vivere in Pace*.

Alas, in these days, musical at-homes are practically extinct. But it might be of interest to the vanishing race of those still able to oblige at the pianoforte when the local baritone is persuaded to give tongue, that Gerald Moore, who has raised accompanying to a fine art, will be giving a talk on March 30.

The period ends in the lighter vein with two comedies. *Love in Albania*, by Eric Linklater, with a plot too complicated to summarise, will be seen on April 6 and 10, with James Donald, Eleanor Summerfield, Richard Wattis and Peter Dyneley in the leads. W. P. Rilla, who has a nice touch for comedy, produces.

The second comedy is *George and the Dragon*, by Arthur Swinson, which had been scheduled earlier but postponed owing to the death of the late King. Owing to the postponement, the cast has been changed, and the list is not complete at the time of writing. But the production, as already announced, is by Eric Fawcett.

TOO MUCH FOR THE TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

Miss "Sherry" Koehnke, seventeen-year-old American junior table tennis champion, arrived here for the open championships at Wembley with seven smashing get-ups—but she is not going to be allowed to wear any of them, because the T.T.A. insist on regulation dress. Below we show her practising in her censored bobble-trimmed shorts; on the right is the only glimpse we shall get of her frills and fish-net combination; her pretty fancies have been boiled down to the dark shorts and shirt on the left.

★ First Choice ★

AT THE THEATRE . . .

THE DEEP BLUE SEA

(Duchess)

NO; this is not a funny nautical farce, and it is not in the same mood as *French Without Tears*. Yes; Terence Rattigan wrote it; but, then, he has written a good many things since his first romp in the mid-'thirties. We have long ceased to label him. He has been—and I choose at random—the able commercial craftsman of *Flare Path*, the more urgently serious dramatist of *The Winslow Boy*, the historical chronicler of *Adventure Story*. And now, in this record of a few hours in one woman's life, he has written a tale of hopeless love that is at once as genuine and as theatrical as anything in his career. I have to pause and admit that, without Peggy Ashcroft, the play might move us less. At the same time, the dialogue is so apt, the tension gauged so precisely, that I cannot imagine any reasonable performance faltering.

The present production, Frith Banbury's, is far more than serviceable. Before the curtain fell at the première, the house had begun to call for Peggy Ashcroft. London cannot show another performance of comparable pathos. When the actress stands quite still, when we see suddenly in her eyes the heartbreak that she tries to hold from her voice, we learn much about the technique of tragic acting. I do not claim that this is a major drama, but it is most cunningly planned and weighted. With Peggy Ashcroft to govern it, the night becomes an emotional experience.

Miss Ashcroft presents a woman who needs an ideal love she cannot have. Because she cannot have it, and because without it her life seems void, she seeks the easy way, suicide. As she confesses: "When you 're between any kind of devil and the deep blue sea, the deep blue sea sometimes looks very inviting." She is found unconscious at curtain-rise; her attempt has failed; the gas has been cut off at the meter. She must go through with the day. And, during that day, Rattigan exposes just what has brought Hester to the end of hope and patience.

It would be a crime, I think, to reveal all that happens. You must be able to live the hours with Hester without the nagging consciousness that you know the end, that nothing A says, or B does, can alter it. I can explain only that Hester's husband is a High Court Judge, kindly, correct, troubled. She has left him and the house in Eaton Square for a shabby little upper flat in Ladbroke Grove, where she lives with a former test-pilot, careless and uncomprehending—the kind of "good sort" one wants to kick very hard, and who yet (in this play) wins grudging sympathy.

Hester is lost. Neither man can offer the quality of love she wants so desperately. To her husband she is a valued possession, the more valuable when it is taken from him. (Shakespeare put it in a phrase: "Th' idea of her life shall sweetly creep into his study of imagination.") To her lover she is part of an existence compact of golf and high-powered cars and good chaps. The true relationship between the two men and the woman is bared with a kind of delicate ruthlessness. Rattigan's writing is transformed by the touch of Peggy Ashcroft, of Roland Culver as the Judge, and of Kenneth More, slangily accurate as the lover who knows that he cannot pass the test.

Other work holds us: that of Peter Illing as an ex-doctor who is now a bookmaker's clerk, and of David Aylmer as a young man who drops enough bricks to build a block of flats. But I come back always to Peggy Ashcroft. Watch her eyes as she listens. This is not mere impersonation. It is, and excitingly, life.

THE DEEP BLUE SEA. Roland Culver as William Collyer, the judge whose knowledge of human conduct does not extend to his wife's.

Peggy Ashcroft as Hester Collyer, the kind of decorous woman for whom love can suddenly become an obsession.

(Above.) Between the devil of love and the deep blue sea of oblivion, Hester chooses the latter; the scene after her attempted suicide.

(Right.) William Collyer looks on while Mr. Miller, a discredited doctor, tells Hester she has a strong constitution.

. . with J. C. TREWIN

Kenneth More as Freddie Page, on whom Hester lavishes her passion.

Mr. Miller (Peter Illing) tells Hester how to live without hope.

Poor Freddie, who wanted a light love-affair and got a grand passion, says good-bye to Hester.

★ Also Chosen ★

CALL ME MADAM

(Coliseum)

WE are told in the Coliseum programme that "neither the character of Mrs. Sally Adams, nor Miss Billie Worth, resembles any other person alive or dead." Another note adds: "The play is laid in two mythical countries. One is called Lichtenburg, the other the United States of America." Now we know. Or do we? Personally, I think that one should be a citizen of the second mythical country to wring the best from this energetic burst in the musical-comical-political, this diplomatic incident in a not-very-grand Duchy. I assumed that all around me at the Coliseum on the first night had the proper citizenship. Not a quip escaped them, and They Liked Ike.

The idea of a woman Ambassador is hardly fresh in the theatre. *Call Me Madam* has the luck to have Irving Berlin's music. The dialogue is not especially sharp, and the invention avoids wit (Mrs. Sally Adams trips over her Court train which she calls the Golden Arrow). Still, the lyrics do flick easily into place, and the tunes insist on being whistled. So there it is. *Call Me Madam* will go down as the piece with "It's a Lovely Day To-day," "The Ocarina," "You're Just In Love" and "They Like Ike." It is also the piece with Billie Worth in the Ethel Merman part of Mrs. Sally Adams, whose favourite joke is to ring up "Harry" in Washington. She is a vigorous, strident player who gets there less from natural causes than from persistent, sheer hard work. (But she does get there.) Anton Walbrook toils, with the best of goodwill, to assure us that he is fascinated by a part which requires him both to sing (he is not yet famed as a singer), and to turn some trying speeches to gold. Being Anton Walbrook, he survives the evening without loss of face. Shani Wallis, undeniably a singer (with one good song), Jeff Warren and Donald Burr help a "musical," Sally-get-your-man, that will run, according to protocol, and has, I agree, a certain wild and feverish charm.

THE CONSTANT COUPLE

(Winter Garden)

RESTORATION Comedy has a trick of working one joke to death. It can grow distasteful and tedious. George Farquhar's play, far brisker than most, may lack the gloss of Congreve's wit, but it has a frank liveliness—it is very much a young man's piece—and an actor with the right kind of personality as Sir Harry Wildair can carry the night. Alec Clunes, as we know well from those memorable revivals at the Arts Theatre, has the personality, and the night is carried. Nothing in its mood could better this Wildair's gay impudence in the famous scenes of mistaken identity. Even if the plot's intricate manœuvres are lost sometimes on the great stage of the Winter Garden, Wildair is always ready to appear again for our relief. I shall think of the evening in terms of his line, "Oh, the delights of love and burgundy!"

Maxine Audley and Ruth Trouncer speak admirably for the plotting Lurewell and the chaste, the candied Angelica. As Wildair says in the last couplet:

Woman,
Charming woman, can true converts make;
We love the precepts for the teacher's sake.

Once more, a Clunes performance is on no account to be missed.

Present and Future

THE London revues are still in stir-about high spirits. At the Globe *The Lyric Revue*, intimate and satirical, seems by now to be as much a part of Shaftesbury Avenue as the far broader *Knights of Madness* is a part of Victoria. The Crazy Gang's frenzy has celebrated its second birthday; so far, 1,500,000 people have seen it at the Victoria Palace.

Excitement, a generous affair in the Casino's accepted style, has just opened: it tells Londoners, for the thousandth time, that they ought to be in Paris. *Penny Plain*, the St. Martin's intimate revue, is past 300 performances and should run through the summer. Joyce Grenfell, Max Adrian, and the rest are enjoyably on top of the world. Marjorie Dunkels has recently changed her material to a one-woman skit on "We Beg to Differ," in which she imagines how Sybil Thorndike, Vivien Leigh, Peggy Ashcroft and Glynis Johns would behave if chosen for this programme. She also includes Kay Hammond, an original member of the team.

THREE TO COME

Michael Redgrave, Googie Withers and Sam Wanamaker (co-presenter with Henry Sherek) appear in Clifford Odets's *Winter Journey* at the St. James's on April 3. This strong, dramatic story of theatre people has had an uncommonly successful pre-London tour. In New York it ran for a long time as *The Country Girl*, a title that might have been confused in Britain with the famous musical comedy. (A *Sketch* preview of this play appears on pages 298-299.)

Henry Sherek has other plans. Thus Benn W. Levy's new comedy, *Cupid and Psyche*, begins at Edinburgh next Monday (March 31), and reaches the West End after a brief tour, with Alexander Knox—last seen in *Return to Tyassi*—Hugh Sinclair, Peggy Cummins, Ronald Ward, and Veronica Turleigh heading a cast of eleven. The author directs. Then, on Easter Monday, *Adam's Apple*, a "Victorian fairy-tale" (period 1890), by N. C. Hunter, author of *Waters of the Moon*, starts its preliminary tour at Brighton. Alan Webb, Marie Löhr, Derek Farr and Barbara Murray are in the company.

LINKLATER'S LATEST

We remember how, at Edinburgh two years ago, Eric Linklater—who knows all about Ben Jonson—cunningly used the plot of *The Alchemist* as the base of a modern comedy. This play, now renamed *The Mortimer Touch*, has begun a pre-London tour, with Roger Livesey (as the charlatan), Pamela Brown, Mervyn Johns and George Relph; the director is George Devine. Sebastian Shaw has replaced Mr. Livesey in *Third Person*, at the Criterion.

GETTING AROUND

Richard Burton, Esmond Knight and Noel Willman (producer) open at the Lyric, Hammersmith, on April 8, in Lillian Hellman's version of *Montserrat*, by Emmanuel Robles. . . . To-night (March 26), *Uncle Vanya*, in a new version by J. P. Davis, directed by John Fernald, begins a four-weeks run at the Arts Theatre Club, with Jenny Laird, Nora Nicholson, Helen Shingler and Cyril Luckham. . . . *The Tempest* (Sir Ralph Richardson as Prospero, and Margaret Leighton as Ariel) entered the Stratford-upon-Avon Festival last night: I will review this—with *Coriolanus*, the opening production—in the next issue of *The Sketch*.

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO . . .

MR. VICTOR BAILIE, for 40 years of cheerful official pickpocketing.

BILLIE WORTH, for succeeding in making her husband call her Madam.

Mr. Victor Bailie, who first started collecting taxes forty years ago, when they were about 7d. in the £, is retiring from his post as chief collector of taxes for the Eastern Region of the City of London. Proud of his record, he once described himself as London's most accomplished pickpocket at a Guildhall session when his own case against tax defaulters immediately followed the conviction of two "light-fingered" gentlemen.

In *Call Me Madam* (see also pp. 276-277) Miss Worth, who plays Sally Adams, American Ambassadress to Lichtenburg, tells Donald Burr, who plays Maxwell Pemberton, an ill-disposed Chargé d'Affaires, to "call her Madam"—in private life he is her husband.

A steeplechaser who likes to be individual is *Klaxton*, temperamental winner of the Grand Military Gold Cup at Sandown Park. Having already thrown his rider up on to his neck, he refused to make an effort until the last two fences, when he came out in fine style to win for the third year running. His rider-owner, Captain W. Gibson, Welsh Guards, hopes to repeat the success next year.

CAPTAIN GIBSON, owner-jockey who stayed on to complete a hat-trick.

LINDY LOO

by Grace Wheatley, A.R.W.S.

"What curious people one meets!"

★ AT THE CINEMA ★

with C. A. LEJEUNE

RASHOMON. A young nobleman and his bride have been assaulted by a bandit in a forest glade. . . . The flashback event on which the film story is based.

If I start this column to-day with an account of the Japanese film *Rashomon*, it is not because of any particular fondness I have for the picture, but rather because I want to get it off my chest. I thought it one of the *horridest* films I have ever seen, but there is no doubt that it is both curious and startling.

Rashomon (a title which is alternatively translated as "In a Bush" or "In the Forest") takes the form of a play within a play; that is to say, in film vernacular, a flashback. The period is 1200 years ago, when the land was laid waste by civil war, the people made sub-human by fear and famine, and brigandage was general. Three men—a woodcutter, a Buddhist priest, and a lewd and uncouth servant—are sheltering from the torrential rain under a ruined city gate. The troubles of the time have reduced them to a common level, in which it is easy for the servant to draw from his companions the story of a horrible experience that is preying on their minds.

The flashback story deals with this horrible experience. Three days earlier, a young nobleman and his bride have been assaulted by a bandit in a forest glade. The bandit has tied up the nobleman and raped his wife before his eyes. The body of the nobleman, unbound, has been found by the woodcutter, who relates his discovery to the police. Who stabbed the nobleman? During the police inquiry, three separate stories are told. The captured bandit gives one version of the killing. The distraught wife gives quite another. The dead man, speaking through the mouth of a woman medium, provides a third. And the servant of the outer story, with a malicious glance towards the woodcutter, suggests a fourth.

We never learn who really killed the nobleman. Nor do the shelterers in the gate. His fate is forgotten in the discovery of an abandoned baby amongst the débris. The servant, chuckling, strips it of its wraps, shoulders the wood he has pillaged from the ruins, and goes away, presumably to further mischief. The woodcutter, with five starving children of his own, hugs the wailing baby to his ragged chest and proposes to adopt it. The priest, who has been tempted by the cruelty of the times to suspect every human being as a symbol of the devil incarnate, bows gravely to him, steps out into the thinning rain, and declares that his faith in man has been restored.

That is the rough outline of *Rashomon*, but I cannot possibly convey on paper the violence with which the film is presented. The outer story is temperate enough, or as temperate as a story can be that deals with people recollecting vivid horror and acting under the influence of mistrust and misery. But the inner story, the account of the rape and murder, shows what it has to show with something of the uninhibited candour and ferocity of the jungle. Nothing we have ever learnt to expect from Japanese drama could quite have prepared us for the vehemence of this exhibition.

We have been accustomed to think of the Japanese as an inscrutable race. We have been taught, perhaps wrongly, to look for ritual in their dramatic art, a certain formality, restraint and elegance. Whatever the form of acting employed in *Rashomon* may be, it is certainly neither inscrutable nor restrained. The pace is terrific, the action taken at a rush, the gestures mainly wild and whirling. The dialogue appears to consist largely of a series of animal noises; pants, grunts, howls and gibbers. The nobleman, to be sure, keeps reasonably quiet, since he spends most of the film either tied up or dead. But the raped wife, once she gets going, gets going with a vengeance, and spares us nothing in the gamut of hysteria, from the racking sob to the piercing scream. The medium has all the horror of a harpy. The bandit proves that he is human by laughing like a maniac, but at other times suggests, by his incessant caperings and scratchings, something from the larger monkey-house.

Rashomon won the first international prize at the Venice Film Festival. The choice presupposes a critical knowledge on the judges' part that few Occidentals would dare lay claim to. How in the world can we *know* how good a film *Rashomon* is; how highly this sort of acting ranks amongst the world's performances; how much of importance the author really has to say; whether the metal from which the film is coined is gold or alloy? Without any critical standards of comparison, I myself should hesitate to give a competitive award to a film that bears no relation to any art I know about, except on the grounds that it is certainly one of the most startling exhibitions I have ever witnessed in the cinema. (The British Board of Censors, by the way, has marked the spot with X).

There is nothing in the least startling about Walt Disney's *Robin Hood*. At moments I almost wished there were. The main trouble with this nice piece is that it is altogether too nice. Its virtues are negative virtues. It is not vulgar, not cruel, not ugly, not ostentatious, and, on the whole, not bad. What it lacks is vigour. It provides a mildly pleasant introduction to the outlaw of Sherwood Forest and his Merrie Men, and in a light way sketches in the outline of their adventures; but there is little hint anywhere in the picture of a robustness that has excited successive generations, and made the exploits of Robin Hood a wonder to be remembered after a lapse of 800 years.

Disney's film was made in England, with a native director (Ken Annakin) and an all-British cast. It is plainly a work not lightly undertaken nor executed, and the producers have clearly gone to great pains to ensure as much accuracy as possible with regard to historical background and detail of accessories. They enclosed a special note in the Synopsis, for instance, to justify the device of whistling arrows.

Was the idea of whistling arrows used by Sherwood Foresters in the film culled from the whistling bombs used in the late war. The answer is that the whistling arrow did, in fact, precede the modern weapon by 800 years. The Foresters placed on their arrows metal attachments which, when contacting the air at speed, set up a piercing whine. The shrill hum acted as warning from look-out posts to the main body of outlaws. *Via* this whistling, and the colour of the arrows, the Foresters knew who fired the arrows and from which part of the forest they came, and thus were prepared for any threatened danger.

Hurrah! It 's delightful to know that something is both immediately effective and historically accurate. The whistling arrows are fine.

Robin Hood really tries, I do feel sure, to give a fair picture of the times of Richard Cœur de Lion and Prince John, and there are few moments that can be decisively pointed at as anachronisms. But in all the care and affection lavished on this film, the producers seem to have overlooked one small timeless thing of essential value—gusto.

The work is weakly. It seems to lack the stamina to go out and have a bold smack at the subject. Nobody can say that *Robin Hood* is unpleasing. It is very pleasant indeed to see the English woods and rivers; pleasant to listen to Elton Hayes' Allan-a-Dale, singing variations of cowboy ditties to a lute accompaniment. Richard Todd's Robin Hood is pleasant, too, although there is little hint that this personable and modest young man might lead a band of desperate outlaws, let alone survive as a traditional hero for roundabout eight centuries. Perhaps James Hayter, as Friar Tuck, comes nearest to the jolly breadth and rollick of the original legend; and there are a few moments, as he savours his malmsey and pigeon pie, and calculatingly carries the stranger Robin across the ford, when we are recaptured by the ancient spell of magic, and find ourselves ageless and enchanted in an old time that is always springtime. For the sake of such moments I can't find it in my heart to be unkind to this well-meaning little picture. It isn't a very good one, not nearly as effective as the two slapdash, carefree Hollywood attempts at the subject that have preceded it. But it does try *so* hard to be good.

L. to r.: Miss Jill Edwards, Miss R. Elliott-Smith, Mr. John Monier-Williams and Mr. Peter Garnett, well equipped with gloves, race glasses and a nice shiny car to stand on.

Mr. P. Harvey (*left*) winning the Open Race, Division I., on *Bonjour*, from Mr. R. H. Robert on *Jockey Blue*; St. John Ambulance men crouch ghoulishly beside the fence with a handy shooting-stick to rest on.

POINT-TO-POINT AT COTTENHAM

The Cambridge University United Hunts' Club Point-to-Point was held at Cottenham on March 7. Most of the people there were young and the girls hatless; the going was good, the day fine and a happy, picnicy time was had in the open.

L. to r.: Mr. Julian Tennant, Miss Camilla Tennant and Mr. Paul Asquith have lunch, an open picnic basket behind them. There were masses of smart-looking cars, and tweed caps were very much the thing among the undergraduates.

L. to r.: Miss Myrtle Crawford, who brought her dog *Sally*, Miss June Cloudesley-Smith, Mr. Henry Bellingham and Mr. Montague Ainslie, busy with their race cards.

L. to r.: Mr. Peter Lumsden, Miss Diana Guinness, Mr. Charles Wauchope and Miss Jaqueline Ryder brood about the next race. It was a truly spring-like day, warm enough for coats to be carried and gloves discarded.

1. Frank Elgin, nervous at the reading of a new play, suddenly plunges dramatically into a part he made famous years ago ; Bernie Dodd is hunched in the foreground.

2. In Boston a week later Frank is distressed after a dress rehearsal that has gone badly ; Georgie does her duty as an actor's wife and assures him he was magnificent in the part.

A "Sketch" Theatre Preview

★

"WINTER JOURNEY"

This new play by Clifford Odets is being presented at the St. James's Theatre on Thursday, April 3, by Henry Sherek and Sam Wanamaker. Michael Redgrave plays Frank Elgin, a once-famous actor undone by drink ; Googie Withers has the part of Georgie, his wife ; Sam Wanamaker is Bernie Dodd, a director who remembers Frank's good days ; Arthur Hill plays Paul Unger, an author ; Robert Percival is Phil Cook, an impresario ; Hazel Penwarden appears as Nancy Stoddard, a young actress ; and Guy Kingsley Poynter is Larry, a stage manager.

5. A drinking lapse of Frank's has decided the backer to cancel the play ; Bernie, infuriated, still has a faint hope that he can overrule the decision, but hesitates to take the risk.

3. In the same Boston theatre dressing-room a few nights later, Nancy Stoddard, the ingénue in the play, tells Georgie, who smiles ironically, that they might be taken for sisters.

4. A row between Frank and Georgie, who has told him she is going back to New York. He proclaims his utter dependence on her; she won't accept it, and slams out of the dressing-room.

6. Bernie, shattered by the realisation of Frank's true character, tries to persuade Georgie to stay with him until the play opens; she responds with a furious tirade about her sufferings.

7. Georgie does stand by Frank, and back-stage on the first night he thanks her for the faith she has shown in him and begs her to give their marriage another chance.

A Hillman "Minx" saloon of the type described by our Motoring Correspondent in the accompanying article.

THE WORLD OF MOTORING

FAST—AND COMFORTABLE

By William Hartley

HAVING borrowed a Hillman "Minx" to make a dawn run to Folkestone to see the Monte Carlo competitors embark, I was so struck with the way in which the car performed that I made plans to try another for a few days of normal use. And the "Minx" provided good, comfortable, fast transport for about 700 miles in six days. I think the point is that it has been developed over many years. Here and there a major change has been made, but this period of gradual modification over twenty years produces something very satisfactory.

The "Minx" performs on the road really very well indeed and the quite small engine (about 10·4 h.p.) propels the car with full load at quite surprising speed. It was perfectly easy to cruise at 55 or 60 miles an hour with a little in hand, and all this with petrol consumption on the right side of 30 to the gallon. There is nothing that I can complain about in the steering or suspension of the car, either. It steers well and brakes well. The car I used was quite outstanding for silence, which I like. I suppose the integral construction of chassis and body contributes to this and also to the feeling of sturdiness and rigidity.

I, for one, like the bench-type front seat, although I would have liked a folding arm in the centre. That is one of my personal fads, perhaps, and it could always be fitted later as an extra—and we must remember that this little car represents real economy, and to go on adding extras would spoil the basic figure. Not that the standard of finish and detail is cut down to a price by any means—it is well done indeed. The frontal vision is exceptionally good, and that adds to driving ease and safety too. Even the back-seat passengers commented on the excellent view forward.

The rear boot provides the vast space we seem to get from so many cars now. Personally, I would often gladly exchange an inch or two of that space for an inch or two more in interior length. One does not always want to put everything in the boot. That, by the way, is not intended as a criticism of the "Minx" but a general comment on a modern trend.

Another point that comes to mind covers most new cars, too. I appreciate all that has been done to seal them and make them entirely draught-proof. Very nice. But one snag is that it is quite hard to close the door when all windows are shut—the air just won't let you do it without a slam. I think someone might arrange a valve of some kind. But the need for it does emphasise the perfection of the sealing on the "Minx." By the way, I liked the arrangement of the heater and air-conditioning apparatus as well as any I have struck. One soon learns to control it to suit exact needs. The "Minx" certainly looks a neat, tidy and handy little car, and that it most certainly proved to be.

TALKING of things being neat and tidy, I suppose most people have noticed the vast improvement in the state of many petrol stations and the men who serve motorists. It is, of course, due to the petrol companies spending time and money in cleaning them up and training the staff. In return for this, petrol station operators are linking themselves up to a single brand. This does improve matters and cuts down distribution costs. The cleaning of windscreens and other free services which are now being thrust upon people buying petrol are all welcome, and for those who don't want to waste time, it is always open to say so and limit it to getting the petrol. I have observed that the Shell people have not tied garages too tightly—they do allow them to sell certain other specified brands of spirit, which is to our good and which shows some appreciation of the customer's point of view. And our thanks are due to Shell and other petrol people for cleaning up what had become a dreadful mess. We need no longer suffer slow service from dirty attendants or mechanics, who too often seemed to regard the sale of petrol as a nuisance. Now I hope they will also have the change handy or, better still, readily agree to sell petrol in split gallons so that change is not necessary: say, ten or twenty shillings' worth. That, I know, can only be done where the pumps also register the price, but it is very handy.

Another petrol problem is when are we going to get branded spirit instead of this pool product? That is a question no one can, or will, answer. It is tied up with dollars until the home refineries are really working full out. But when it does come, the war between the petrol firms will be worth seeing, and we, the customers, will surely benefit, which is as it should be.

THE fixture list for sporting events of all kinds in this country offers a vast choice for almost any day. The calendar may prove to be too full, as clashes of events may restrict entries in some cases. But motor sport is now much more widespread than ever before and it has a great many followers, too. Again, we, the customers, can only rejoice. And with so many events in the Formula 2 class, some interesting British cars will be lined up. With several British entrants for major events on the Continent, we may well see 1952 as the best year ever for British motor sport, starting with the splendid Monte Carlo results. All will wish good fortune to makers and drivers. This does good for us all in the end. British prestige and exports benefit. And the experience gained comes back to us in our normal production models in future years.

MAKING ITS BOW—the new Armstrong-Siddeley "Whitley" four-door, six-light saloon, introduced for the first time at the 22nd International Motor Show at Geneva, which opened last Thursday (March 20). It is generally similar to the "Whitley" six-light saloon, but a quarter-light has been added to give extra visibility and rearrangement of the back of the car has increased leg room and made the interior more spacious.

Our Fashion Portfolio

1. SPRING ENSEMBLES

This season Paris prefers two-piece ensembles. Dresses are formal with rounded shoulder lines and softly draped busts above gay cummerbunds. Clever use is made of tucks or darts to give the waisted look; the waist, however, frequently alters its position. Dior showed the martingale back to his, while Jacques Fath and Desses favoured the bolero. Unpressed pleats were shown to give the peg-top line on skirts, or to add movement below the knee.

Grey predominates. Crisp white piqué or organdie adds distinction to neat necklines and sleeves. Some models have large, detachable collars and cuffs. The jumper suit makes a return with a large sailor collar and cuffed hipline.

★

Grey worsted flannel dress and jacket by Frederick Starke. The dress has the new rounded shoulder line to the short sleeves. Pure silk surah is used for the beautiful drapery round the neck. The top is close-fitting and there is a narrow leather belt. Two unpressed pleats fold over the hip from the waist to give the peg-top line to the skirt, which falls straight in front. Two unpressed inverted pleats give movement to the back of the skirt. The jacket has high revers and fastens with three buttons. Two slit pockets are the only decoration.

The outfit complete is about 39 guineas. From Harvey Nichols, London; Samuels of Manchester.

The hat is by Otto Lucas, designed to show the hair at the back, and is made in white balli-buntal straw. The small cloche brim is trimmed with black velvet and has a bow at the back. Fine, spotted veiling covers the face.

About £13 from Fortnum and Mason, Debenham and Freebody of London, and F. Marshalls of Harrogate.

Our Fashion Portfolio

2. MORE BREATHS OF SPRING

Right:

This time grey appears in a bird's-eye suiting dress and "masher" jacket featured by Marcus. The classic dress with channel seamed bodice introduces white with a small cross-over white piqué collar.

The skirt has all-round box pleats and the jacket is quite straight front and back, and fastens with three buttons. Made in sizes 12-18, this ensemble from Harrods is about £46 complete.

The hat, by Madge Chard, is made in narrow grey-and-white-striped grosgrain, with upturned tails at the back and finished with black veiling. It can be made in green and white or red and white and costs about £8 at Dickins and Jones of London; Greensmith Downs of Edinburgh.

Below:

The grey which Paris has made so popular this spring is used in a medium shade for this crêpe worsted dress and jacket by Matita. The dress has short sleeves and a white shark-skin cross-over collar which is carried to a deep square in front. The skirt has a pencil-slim front with open darts at the top and grouped knife pleats at the back. The waist is in the normal place and the jacket fastens with a single button. Other buttons carry out the V-formation of the long white shark-skin revers; the sleeve gives a cuff effect.

It can be had in light or dark grey in sizes 10-18. From Joan Russell of London; Vogue of Cambridge; Ella Stewart of Edinburgh. The price is approximately 40 guineas.

Madge Chard's cap has an adaptable front of matching grey worsted on white grosgrain. From Marshall and Snelgrove of London, or Vincent Williams of Chester. Price about £4 19s. 6d.

On the opposite page:

A neat travelling ensemble. The Jacardigan suit in saddle cord has an all-round box-pleated skirt. The fitted jacket with the three-button fastening has a detachable collar, and the suit can therefore, by the use of blouses or jewellery and a town hat, be transformed for formal occasions.

Over the suit, Wetherall's luxury four-way cashmere double doeskin coat is beautifully warm, but, nevertheless, light in weight. The half-belt is buttoned on at the back and is reversible, like the collar and cuffs. Two large patch pockets, one with an extra little pocket, add an air of importance.

The little bonnet-shaped hat comes in matching saddle cord, and is perfect for travel comfort. It is reasonably priced at 2 guineas.

The whole outfit is in a warm shade of snuff, with contrasting cuffs; collar and facings are in beige. The coat is priced at about 30 guineas, the suit at about 20 guineas, from all Wetherall shops.

Our Fashion Portfolio

3.

For the Slender Purse:

The straight sleek dress for town or country is always a favourite for the sunny spring day with a nip in the air.

This close-fitting dress is a Jolo model in pure angora wool jersey. The material, a mixture of grey and pink giving the appearance of subtle "off-lilac," is one of the new spring colours. The clever working of the stripe gives the slimming asymmetrical line still so fashionable. Another fashion feature is the smart upstanding collar; also the sloping hip pocket on the straight skirt. This allows for easy movement by a small, low, unpressed inverted pleat on the left side. The amusing metal fob which hangs from the self belt is included. Altogether elegant for town wear and suitable for a country afternoon, it is indeed a bargain at approximately £9 from Dickins and Jones' inexpensive department, or from Romanes and Patterson of Edinburgh.

The little hat in grey straw trimmed with a small bunch of lilac and upstanding quill is by Madge Chard. Reasonably priced at 2½ gns., it is obtainable from Dickins and Jones of London and Vincent Williams of Chester. The long French suède gloves are 58s. 9d. from Selfridges; the umbrella, in grey French art silk with Perspex handle, is also from Selfridges at 65s.

The classic court shoes, "Athene," by Lotus, complete the outfit. Perfectly cut in grey calf, low at the side and curved over the instep, they have the fashion detail of an expensive shoe. They are also available in black patent, suède and many other colours from Lotus of Bond Street and Woollands of Knightsbridge. Price: £4 9s. 6d.

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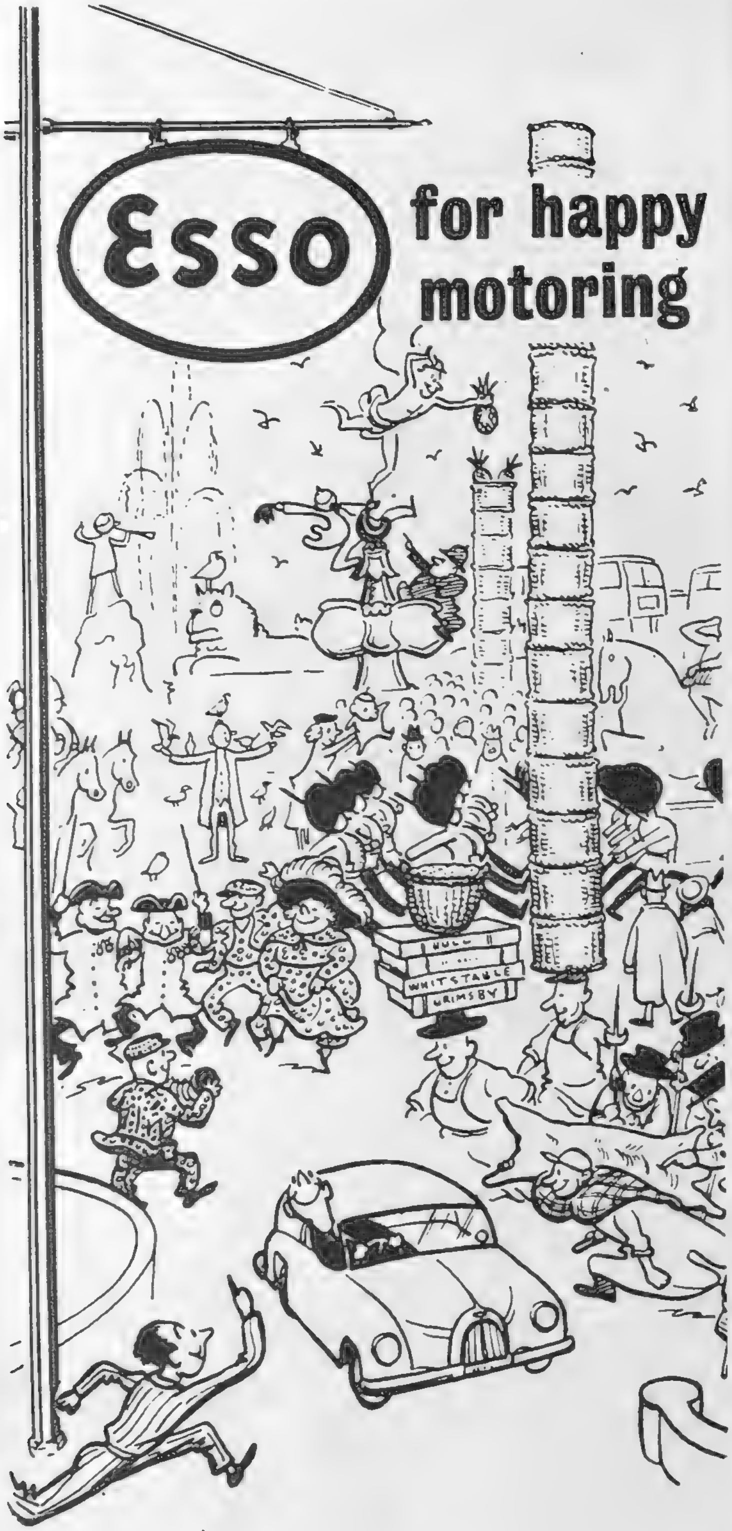

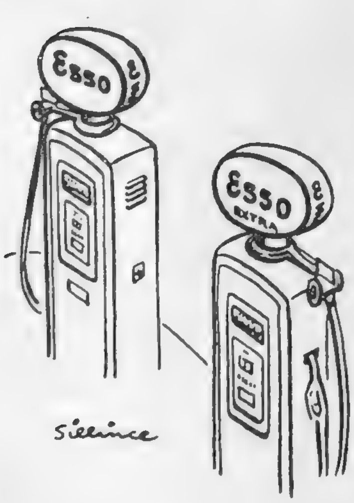

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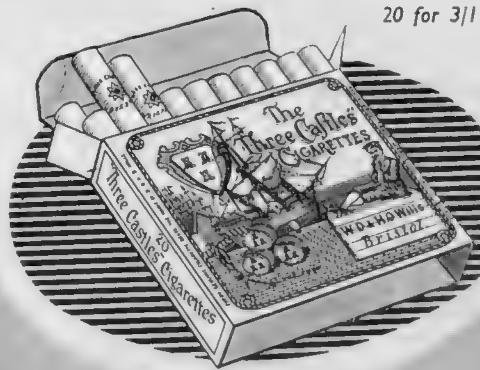

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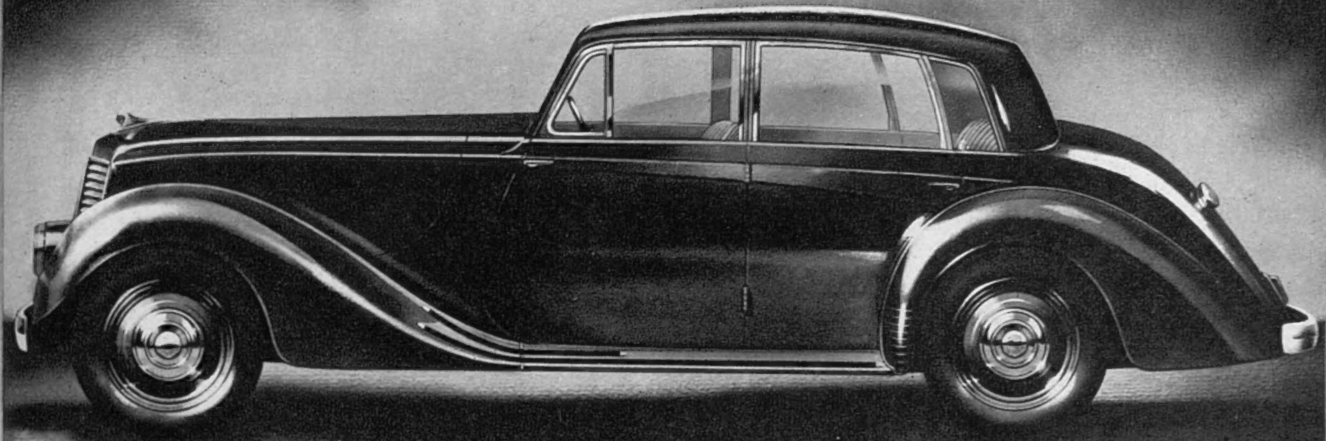

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